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THE LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY MODEL

BY

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In 1987 Department of the Army published two documents addressing leadership at the senior level. Neither document, however, addressed the concept of leader philosophy. Although the concept, leader philosophy, is fairly well accepted there is no doctrinal guidance on what should be included in the philosophy. The VCL (Variables of Leadership) Model contains six variables which can generate considerable information and insight for a statement of leadership philosophy. The VCL Model's flexibility allows expansion of other variables of leadership as they apply to an individual situation. This simple model provides a format for the senior leader to use so that he may share his leadership philosophy with subordinates. This carefully formulated statement will pave the way for an open and productive relationship between the senior leader and his subordinates. The proper application of the VCL Model will produce well-oriented leaders who in turn can develop a leadership philosophy that will produce effective organizations.

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THE LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY MODEL

An Individual Study Project
Intended for Publication

by

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ABSTRACT

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In 1987 Department of the Army published two documents addressing leadership at the senior level. Neither document, however, addressed the concept of leader philosophy. Although the concept, leader philosophy, is fairly well accepted there is no doctrinal guidance on what should be included in the philosophy. The VOL (Variables of Leadership) Model contains six variables which can generate considerable information and insight for a statement of leadership philosophy. The VOL Model's flexibility allows expansion of other variables of leadership as they apply to an individual situation. This simple model provides a format for the senior leader to use so that he may share his leadership philosophy with subordinates. This carefully formulated statement will pave the way for an open and productive relationship between the senior leader and his subordinates. The proper application of the VOL Model will produce well-oriented leaders who in turn can develop a leadership philosophy that will produce effective organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present a model which senior leaders may use as a guide in developing their own leadership philosophy. Senior leaders being identified as officers in the grade of O-6 and higher. The model is not a cookbook solution; rather it sets forth a conceptual framework which provides focus on many of the critical variables of leadership. Many will find as they work with the model that they will develop other variables or factors to add to the model. Thus, the model proposed in this paper is formative: it can be adapted to various styles of leadership and types of organizations.

What is a "leadership philosophy"? One writer states that it is a "distillation of experience and theory, arrived at through a long and somewhat tenuous process of observation, study, application and reflection upon one of the....least understood phenomena on earth."1 Another observes that it is a "concise statement describing what the leader considers to be most important and provides insight into how the leader goes about doing his job so that others can synchronize their efforts with his."2 The important point in both of these definitions is that the philosophy is complex; it provides insight, and describes what is important.

Although there is extensive literature on the topic of

leadership, little of it refers to leadership philosophy at the senior level. Much of the literature on the senior leader is personal-opinion essays discussing styles of leadership.³ Leadership philosophy and the techniques of developing one's own leadership philosophy, however, have received very little attention.

In 1987 the Department of the Army published two documents specifically for senior leaders. FM 22-103, "Leadership and Command at Senior Levels" and Department Of The Army Pamphlet 600-80, "Executive Leadership" established leadership doctrine for senior leaders. Both documents offer senior leaders good general guidance. However, neither document mentioned leadership philosophy or command philosophy. Today the question still remains, what mechanism should senior leaders use to introduce themselves and provide initial leadership guidance to an organization?

Many senior leaders may believe that a leadership philosophy is not necessary. But what are some of the possible consequences of not letting your organization know "where you stand"? Some possibilities are:

- *Subordinates second guessing your intentions.
- *Piecemeal changes and initiation of policies.
- *Dysfunctional redirection of energy and focus of subordinates.
- *Inappropriate use of human and material resources as priorities change.
- *Delay in building trust and confidence.

In Taking Charge: A Practical Guide For Leaders, General Perry Smith advocates that when one moves to a new job he should write a personal philosophy letter. The philosophy should stress the importance of the mission and the leader's personal commitment to keeping the mission as the top priority for the organization.⁴ This personal commitment, I believe will cause one's philosophy to provide insight into their particular style of leadership. Thus one may conclude that a leader's leadership style may be a product of his philosophy.

Leadership styles may differ because of cultural differences--particularly customs and traditions--as well as educational and social-economic background, or military experience. Therefore, since the leadership process really is a function of the leader, the followers, and other situational variables, the desire to have a single ideal type leader behavior seems unrealistic.⁵ Our personal differences and changing leadership styles provide ample justification for developing an individual leadership philosophy.

The Model

One of the paradoxes of an increasingly specialized, bureaucratized society is that the qualities required in the rise to eminence are less and less the qualities required once eminence is reached.

Henry Kessinger

Over the years behavioral scientists and military scholars have studied many different types of organizations

producing endless lists of characteristics which distinguished successful ones from the unsuccessful ones. However, today we still produce these lists thinking we are going to finally hit the mark with the right variables. In other words there is still disagreement on the characteristics. But there is consensus in the research that there is one major attribute that sets successful organizations apart from unsuccessful organizations: dynamic and effective leadership.⁵ Effective leaders possess certain leadership attributes that have made them and their organizations successful.

The Peters and Waterman study, In Search Of Excellence, identified eight attributes of excellent organizations. Restated for the military, the attributes are:

- *Active participation.
- *Responsiveness to the commander.
- *Power down.
- *Achievement through the efforts of others.
- *Excellence in performance.
- *Adherence to the mission.
- *Simple form, lean staff.
- *Centralized planning, decentralized execution.⁷

If we accept the above attributes as being essential for successful organizations, then we should try to mold leadership skills and our philosophy in this direction. We must not forget that leaders are the ones that make the difference. Teaching leadership skills that enable future

leaders to build effective organizations is what leadership training should be all about.

However, at the senior leader level, teaching new skills may be difficult. At the senior level, we should focus on the leader's ability to draw upon his education and practical experience to develop creative, dynamic vision and direction for the organization.

Ralph M. Stogdill, a behavioral theorist, identified the following functions of leadership:

- *Defining objectives and maintaining goal direction.

- *Providing means of goal attainment.

- *Providing and maintaining group structure.

- *Facilitating group action and interaction.

- *Maintaining group cohesiveness and member satisfaction.

- *Facilitating group task performance.⁸

Current literature for senior leaders refers to these functions, linking them to the building of successful organizations. As senior leaders study the leadership doctrine and reflect on their past, they develop a personal philosophy concerning how they will operate in their next staff or command assignment. But how do they pull all this together and articulate their thoughts so members of the organization understand where they are coming from or hope to go? As Casey Stengel once stated, "If you don't know where you are going, you are liable to end up somewhere else!" The best way to develop the philosophy fully and to

share it completely is through a written document. Through it, all the contemplation, reflection, and anticipation of assuming a senior leadership position can come to life.

Certainly senior leaders want to build successful organizations, such as the ones we have mentioned. They also want to carry out Stogdill's leadership functions. However, they have no guidance to direct or aid them in structuring the above process into a leadership philosophy.

A good place to start to develop a leadership philosophy is through a simple model. There is no magic here - just a consolidation of what the behavioral theorists have to say and our current leadership manuals advocate. Such a model provides a foundation for future leaders - a place upon which to build.

My proposed model, The VOL (Variables Of Leadership) Model, (see figure 1) isolates a series of interacting leadership variables, which I believe are the basic elements of a leadership philosophy. The variables are not omnipresent; they evolve over time. Later we will discuss how the senior leader's style of leadership and behavior changes as he moves up in the hierarchy of the military organization. Some of this change occurs because the leader's philosophy of leadership changes. But some analysts suggest that a philosophy of leadership worthy of the name will not change, even though behavior and style change with the environment.⁹

The variables set forth common contingencies which

senior leaders must confront frequently in their organizations. An effective leadership philosophy must address these variables if they hope to achieve effective organizations with healthy climates. The remainder of this study will analyze these variables, discussing how they should fit into the senior leader's philosophy in the following sequence:

Self-Assessment

Vision

Skills

The Environment

Ethics

Trust

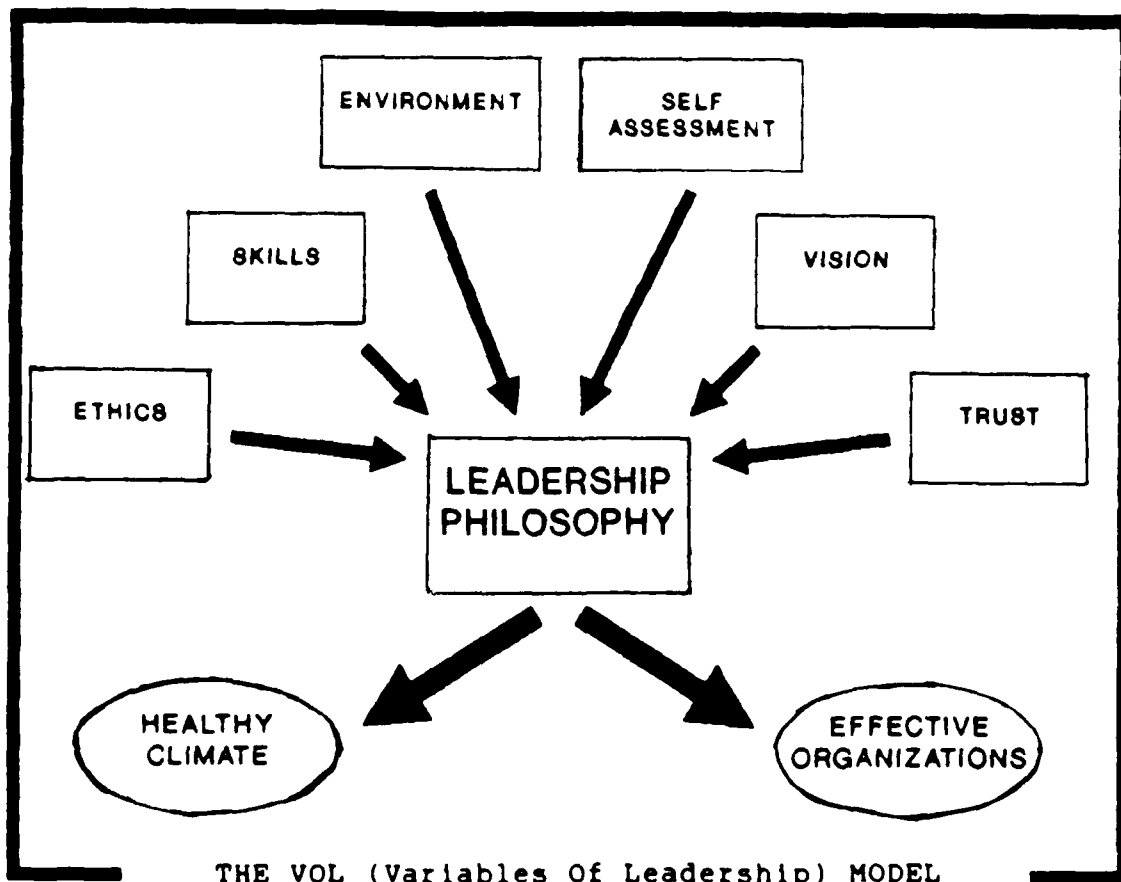


FIGURE 1

Self-Assessment

What a man thinks about himself, that
is what determines, or rather indicates
his fate

Thoreau

Senior leaders must understand themselves. Socrates' maxim "Know thyself" is fundamental to leadership.¹⁰ Self-assessment may be the most challenging variable in the VOL model because many leaders are not introspective and some seek to depersonalize tasks of leadership. But self-assessment probably is the most important variable for a senior leader. Self-assessment can be undertaken by several means. The purpose of the philosophy is to articulate one's principles of leadership to subordinates. So if a leader can provide information about how he arrived at his philosophy, this background may add insight about how he plans to conduct business.

Senior leaders normally have served in many different type command and staff positions. The military experience and past assignments have shaped their careers and influenced the way they think. General Patton, once accused of making snap decisions, replied: "I've been studying the art of war for forty-odd years. When a surgeon decides in the course of an operation to change its objective....he is not making a snap decision but one based on knowledge, experience, and training."¹¹

Senior leaders in fact do have considerable knowledge, experience and training. But many times their subordinates

do not know the particulars of their experiences. How does one provide subordinates this information without appearing boastful? A very simple way is to attach an updated copy of the Officers Record Brief (ORB) to the philosophy letter. The ORB not only provides some personal data subordinates may find interesting but also a listing of all assignments, schools, and special qualifications. This document may enable subordinates to better understand their new leader. So a short paragraph in the philosophy letter directing subordinates' attention to the ORB would suffice to show some personal data on the new leader.

Also self-assessment serves to identify a style of leadership. Leadership style sets forth the behavior pattern a person exhibits when attempting to influence the activities of others, as this behavior is perceived by those others.¹² Fred Fiedler indicates a person's leadership style reflects the individual's basic motivational and need structure.¹³

Choice of language is critical in describing leadership style. In most cases, a senior leader's own familiar language may be more effective in a "philosophical" document than more clinical jargon. For example, many leaders may believe that vital, dynamic organizations should foster "self-actualization". In a television documentary, the story was told how Admiral Crowe once defied Admiral Rickenbacker's directive that Crowe abandon his doctoral studies in international studies to assume command of a nuclear submarine. As it turned out, Crowe's vast knowledge of international affairs prepared him

more for his current role as Chairman of the Joint Chief Of Staffs than submarine command would have. But should Crowe tell his subordinates that he "self-actualized" when he defied Rickenbacher? It would probably be more effective for Crowe to tell his subordinates, in his native Oklahoman language, that Admiral Rickenbacher "put him between a rock and a hard place." Then he might go on to reflect in familiar language on why he elected to finish his dissertation. So, he would not use the jargon of self-actualization. But he would show how he took charge of his own professional development at a critical time in his career. He might note that some people thought he "shot himself in his foot,"; but, as it turned out, he gave himself a "shot in the arm," that is, a critical career boost. My point here is to use a language that truly reflects your style.

Today there are many leader survey instruments available to aid us in trying to understand ourselves. Normally these self-assessments offer participants a unique set of insights into their various strengths and weaknesses.

The Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description Instrument is an instrument to see how your behavior fits into some of the concepts and models developed for understanding leader behavior.¹⁴ The answers provide some insight into how you may operate as a leader. The answers may provide information as to what a person's philosophy of leadership is going to be in certain situations.

Another excellent instrument is the Myers Briggs Type

Indicator. This instrument measures personality styles and preferences along four continuums, which further separate into sixteen categories.¹⁵ After one has taken this assessment, they receive a handout that summarizes the information about their particular personality type. So a summarized printout of a prospective leader's personality type could as well be attached to a letter of philosophy. Subordinates will gain a great amount of insight into what you all about from such a survey.

Surely looking at oneself and making an assessment may be a difficult process, but it may prove to be the most important preparation a senior leader makes for developing his leadership philosophy. As General Smith has observed, "If a leader is introspective, they can serve as better leaders. They also can avoid some mistakes and portray the aura of leadership which, in turn, elicits both respect of subordinates and support for a leader's initiatives."¹⁶

In fact, General Smith offers an introspection checklist in his book. Many of these ideas would also be excellent points to include in one's leadership philosophy. Also his introspection checklist offers many potential productive points of inquiry for one to study. An example of a question in the checklist is: Who tells you all the news-good and bad?¹⁷ I know from personal experience that sometimes the messenger can be shot. I strongly recommend General Smith's introspection checklist because it will make

one reflect even more on their own past and their personal experiences and greatly assist one in personalizing their philosophy. The more sincere and personal you make your leadership philosophy the more effective I believe it will be.

Leaders interested in increasing their success as senior leaders must give serious thought to self-assessment and make it a part of their leadership philosophy. This self-assessment will in turn help them develop the next important variable in the VOL Model--vision.

Vision

During an operation, decisions have usually to be made at once: There may be no time to review the situation or even to think it through....if the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: First, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead.

Karl von Clausewitz

The quote that may go down in history as the greatest quote of the 20th century may be Dr. Martin Luther King's statement: "I have a dream." In his famous civil rights speech Dr. King talked about his vision and what he hoped to see occur someday in American society. This famous speech provided focus not only for Dr. King's efforts. More importantly it provided the guiding light for all his followers.

The great leaders of our time have been not only

effective operators and decision makers, but also leaders with vision.¹⁸ In a Clausewitzian sense it is his "inner light." Many speakers at the Army War College refer to the need of having a vision. They further observe that if you are persistent, you can make the vision come true.

Senior leaders must have a personal vision of how they are going to create an atmosphere that encourages high integrity, planning, and creativity. Thus they seek for their organization to become the model for others to emulate.¹⁹ This will occur for those leaders who know what they want to do, when they want to do it, how they want to make decisions, and how they want to approach issues.²⁰

Creative leaders recognize the power of dreaming, fantasy, and unconscious thinking. Leaders must get organizations interested in what they are going to become, not what they have been. In Challenge of Command, Roger H. Nye asserts "that a vision is an acute sense of the possible."²¹

Vision puts the leader in a strategic position which will prevent the leader from falling into the traps that short-sightedness and mindless parochialism often set for people.²² Leaders must provide a future for the organization. Leaders who are not planners are simply caretakers and gatekeepers. Though they may run efficient and effective organizations, they do not really serve the long-term interests of the institution unless they plan, set goals, and provide strategic vision. Leaders who care about their missions and about their people normally want to leave

their organizations in better shape and with a clearer strategic direction than when they took over.²³ Good planning, goal setting, and priority setting can accomplish these things and create a legacy.

Most researches agree upon three basic imperatives for excellent organizations: adaptability, stability and productivity.²⁴ They also agree that to achieve these imperatives the leader must have a vision which sets a purpose or a series of organizational goals for an organization. The vision is important in unifying support and commitment among followers. It motivates them to achieve organizational goals. Leaders who exercise the concept of vision and run excellent organizations become known as visionaries or men of vision.²⁵

Renis Likert discovered that high producing supervisors make clear to their subordinates what the objectives are and what needs to be done. Then he gives them freedom to do the job.²⁶ Military leader's vision must include these same tenets. Drawing on his vision the senior leader, must share with the members of the organization what the objectives and goals of the organization are. These initial goals and objectives should provide the road map for accomplishing the senior leader's vision.

So after the senior leader develops his vision, he must then establish goals and objectives for the organization. Initially, this may be difficult, because the leader may not be in the organization yet. However, the senior

leader's experience and background will provide some basic goals and objectives that his "inner feelings" tells him are right. These goals and objectives support his vision and provide that initial guidance for his subordinates. There is nothing concrete about one's vision. In fact, it will probably change over time in the same manner as leadership philosophy itself matures and changes.

• The senior leader works at achieving his vision through both leadership and management. Leadership influences the activities of others in efforts toward goal achievement.²⁷ Management allows a leader to work with and through others to accomplish his organizational goals.²⁸ So leadership deals with influencing others toward goal achievement, where management is a particular application of leadership through which organizational goals are carried out.²⁹

Vision leads inevitably to planning which sets goals and objectives for the organization and develops road maps showing how these goals and objectives are to be accomplished.³⁰ Ideally this translation of vision into action is a continuous process.

• The vision also outline the standards for the organization. If the leader does not articulate the standards through his vision, the organization will dictate the standards. When this occurs, the standards may not be satisfactory to either the leader or the organization.

• Our current senior leaders need to pay more attention to the vision process. The demands of force modernization require relentless visioning. Recent problems in fielding

of new equipment may indeed be the result of a lack of vision from senior leaders in the past. The point is not to blame. Rather, we are now in a position to realize the importance of vision for the management of long-term technological change.³¹

Visioning is a continuous process, but it must originate from a firm foundation. Members of the organization must understand what the senior leaders plans are for the present and the long-term. FM 22-103, chapter 2, outlines the requisites for a military vision. The senior leader must incorporate their vision into their leadership philosophy and show how their unique leader skills will make the vision a reality.

Skills

The acid test of an officer who aspires to command is his ability to be able to grasp quickly the essentials of a military problem.

Field Marshall Montgomery

Leaders develop various skills appropriate at the level of organization they are serving. These skill basically fall into three groups:

- * Technical skills
- * Interpersonal skills
- * Conceptual skills 32

Such skills align themselves not only with various levels of organization but also associate to greater degrees with an appropriate rank:

*Technical skills - Lieutenant/Captain

*Interpersonal skills - Major/Lieutenant Colonel

*Conceptual skills - Colonel/General

Specific tasks required at each level are different. Also, the balance between technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills changes across levels (see figure 2). Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard state that the appropriate mix of these skills varies as an individual advances from supervisory to top management positions.³³

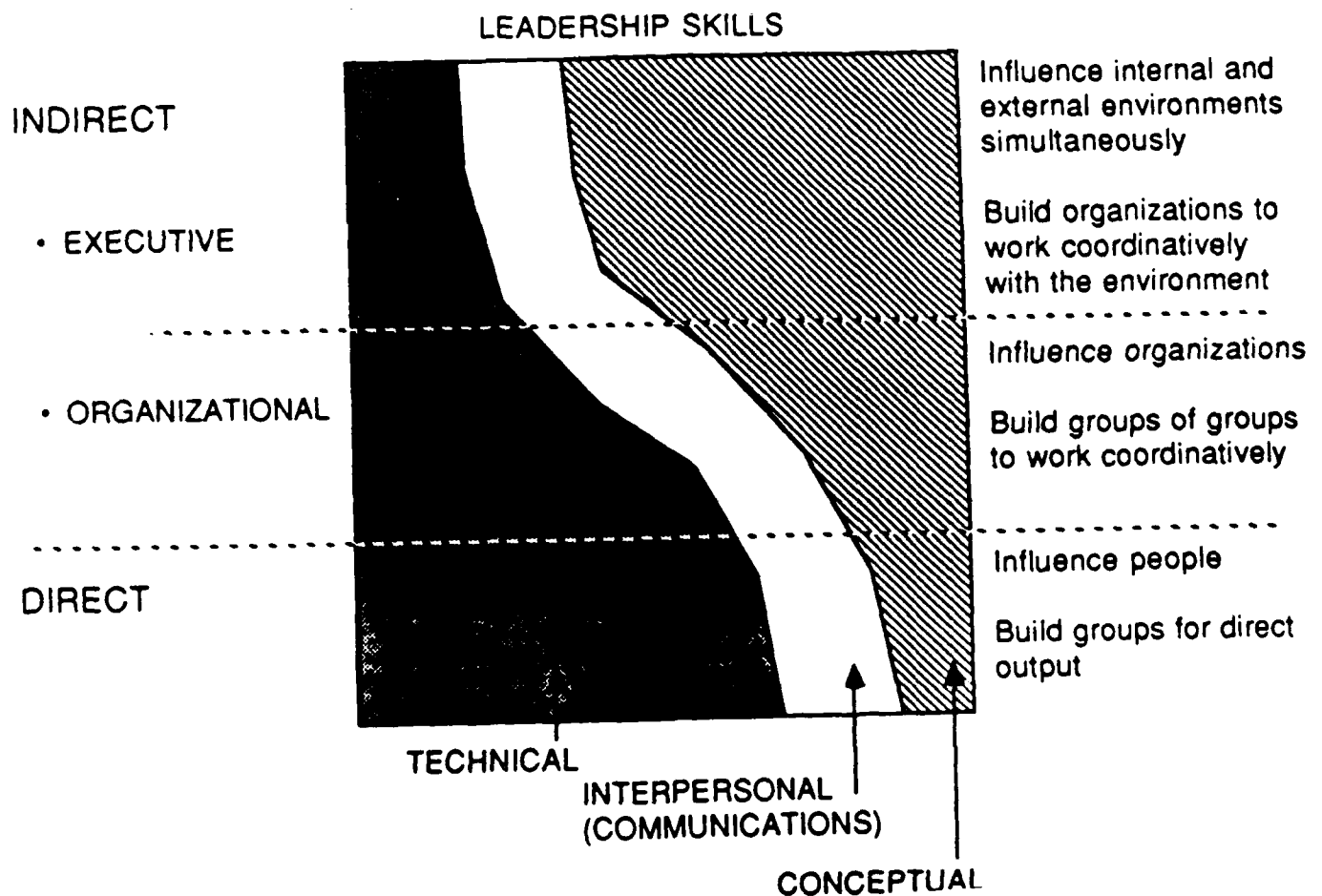
It is difficult to ascertain exactly which one of these skills are most critical for the senior leader. Surely if senior leaders could master all of them, this would be ideal. But that is not possible. However, through self-assessment, the leader should identify both their greater and lesser skills. His philosophy may reveal strong skills and even address those they believe are weak. Besides showing the leader's humanity, this technique could pay big dividends with subordinates, who could work to compensate for their leader's lesser abilities. FM 22-103 states "the hallmark of good senior level leadership is recognizing one's weaknesses and making appropriate adjustments."³⁴

As figure 2 shows, the more senior one is in an organization, the larger role interpersonal and conceptual skills play. DA Pam 600-80 addresses interpersonal skills at the senior level:

Because the relationship at executive levels are primarily lateral and without clear subordination, executives must rely more on the interpersonal

skills involved in negotiation and collaboration. These tasks are accomplished through a process of effective reasoning and logic. Executives must be able to build the perception that their ideas are rational and deserve support.³⁵

Futher, John D. Rockefeller stated "I will pay more for the ability to deal with people than any other ability under the sun."³⁶ The senior leader should express in his leadership philosophy that his duties do not require him to be a technical expert. But his duties require sharp interpersonal skills to develop a cohesive team.



SOURCE: DA Pam. 600-80, p. 14
Figure 2.

The same holds true for conceptual skills, which is the ability to understand the complexities of the overall organization. This knowledge enables one to act according to the objectives of the total organization, rather than only on the goals and needs on one's own immediate group.³⁷

Concerning conceptual skills, T. Owen Jacobs in "The AirLand Battle and Leadership Requirements" says "The very high projected mobility of both friendly and opposing forces, the porous nature of the battlefield, and the need for senior level leaders to plan and execute actions in the 'now' timeframe far to the rear of the opposing force, in order to influence events at the front two to three days later, are factors which require significant conceptual ability beyond that previously required in battle." ³⁸

Senior level leadership requires our best leaders. Moreover, should the senior leader not apply those skills appropriate for a senior leader, then failure may be on the horizon. The leadership philosophy of the senior leader should address the executive skills required of senior leaders. These executive skills provide the ingredients that translate his vision into better organizations for the present and future.

The Environment

Officers at this level must understand the systems. Not just the combat units, but also the support and joint requirements. These are complicated organizations that have to be understood in their own right before you can synthesize them and deal with concepts for change.

Army Staff(***)

The environment within a military organization and the environment that military organizations must function in has no parallel in civilian industry. Understanding the environment and weaving it into the leadership philosophy will give subordinates more insight about their leader. When everyone shares a common perception of the environment this helps in building for the future.

The environment consists of the leader; his followers, superiors, associates, the organization, and the job demands.³⁹ We have all witnessed the changing complexity of the environment in the U.S. Army in the last ten years. Leaders today face a different set of challenges than they did ten years ago. We have progressed to a dynamic organization with a higher level of education and more stringent standards of conduct.⁴⁰

A difficult task for the senior leader is to diagnose this complex environment. It becomes even more complex when we realize that the leader is the focal point around which all the other environmental variables interact. In a sense, all these variables really communicate role expectations to the leader.⁴¹ The senior leader can fulfill many of these expectations through his leadership philosophy when he addresses the environmental conditions.

The environment is the variable in the VOL Model that probably has the greatest impact on causing the philosophy to change over time. All leaders have their own expectations of how they should behave in certain situations. Exactly how they behave depends many times on

these expectations. However, the resulting behavior may change because how leaders interpret the expectations of other people in their environment, such as their superior, associates or subordinates. Empirical studies suggest that leadership varies from situation to situation with changes in leaders, followers and situations.⁴² This is why a senior leader's philosophy may have to change, while his style and behavior may remain the same. The senior leader must keep in mind that the question is not whether there will be a change in the organization, but when and how will he cope with it.

When we contemplate the AirLand Battle of the future, the environment that senior leaders must operate in becomes extremely complex. The senior leader must study this future battle and articulate in his philosophy how he will operate. The senior position may be in a Corps Headquarters, Army Headquarters, or at Department of Army. But the environment will take on a new meaning in AirLand Battle of the future.

There is strong evidence that the AirLand Battle will be very different from previous battlefields. As a result, the nature of leadership will have to change, and with it the kind of thought processes that underlie acts of leadership. The novel nature of leadership in the AirLand Battle scenario will require senior leaders to draw on nontraditional models for insight into the cognitive traits and abilities necessary for leadership in AirLand Battle.⁴³

The senior leader in AirLand Battle will have to deal

with great uncertainty, long distances from the lowest organizational levels, highly abstract information, organizational turbulence and complex interdependences among the various parts of their organizations.⁴⁴

So leadership philosophy should address the key parts of the environment. Insights provided by the senior leader may provide the glue that binds the organization together and promotes the "jelling" that keeps the organization performing at a high level.

Also the senior military leader must comprehend both the current environment of his organization and predict a future battlefield environment which has never been encountered. The environment of the future may challenge the senior leaders also to face ethical dilemmas which no other generation has had to face.

ETHICS

A stifling, over pressured climate
with poorly managed goals and priorities
is a greater stimulant for ethical
misbehavior

Lt. Gen. Walter F. Ulmer

Lord Acton once said "All power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely" - at the senior leader level, this familiar quotation may be most applicable. Very few in the military have not known personally or been aware of a situation where a senior leader has "gotten into trouble." Many times this trouble originated from a violation of ethics, either directly or indirectly. The ethical behavior of a leader

and the ethical behavior he requires of his subordinates play a major role in establishing the proper climate.

AR 600-100 specifies that every Army leader has specific responsibilities for instilling values in their organizations, including the Professional Army Ethic. The regulation requires unit leaders to establish sound organizational operating procedures which will influence army values, while senior leaders influence by policies.⁴⁵

Senior leaders are responsible in the regulation "for developing and articulating Army values and the professional Army ethic. They establish, defend, and enforce Army values and determine the Army's culture. They oversee how the Army functions. They affect all those below them by demonstrating their commitment to Army values, by formulating policies that support and sustain those values, and by ensuring that procedures developed at lower levels support both policy and values."⁴⁶

Army ethics sets forth four basic values: loyalty, duty, selfless service, and integrity.⁴⁷ Doctrine states that if senior leaders wish to achieve their vision then their actions must reflect the ethical system adopted by the United States Army.⁴⁸ One may achieve the organizational values through their individual values of commitment, competence, candor, and courage.⁴⁹

Since the end of the Vietnam conflict, ethics and values have gained increased visibility and attention in the leadership construct. Richard Gabriel stated that if the U.S. Army is ever to recover from the debacle of Vietnam, it

must undergo a "moral renaissance" as an essential precondition for future operational rebuilding.⁵⁰

Most will agree the U.S. Army has made tremendous progress in this area since the Vietnam conflict ended. However, there is always room for improvement. A corps commander recently stated he considered himself a failure because he was unable to discourage what he considered to be unethical conduct by a small percentage of his officers.⁵¹

It is not possible or practical to dictate exactly a senior leader's philosophy. However, the philosophy must include the parameters in the oath of office, which establishes some personal commitments to duty, honor and country. To some the oath is a contractual agreement until their service obligation is over. To the ethical leader, the oath is his pledge to contribute to the common goals of his society. The oath to them is a way of life adopted for the good of all and accepted as a moral commitment, not subject to contractual negotiations.⁵²

In "Leadership and Fellowship," James Burns defined leadership "as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations--the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations--of both leaders and followers."⁵³ Values thus are central to a leader's philosophy because the leader establishes his own values and shows how they serve to uphold those of the organization.

Today we have an enhanced sensitivity to ethical issues.

Often we hear rationalization for misconduct: "I did not know it was wrong, because if I had known I would not have done it." Senior leaders can eliminate many such statements by describing the standards for ethical behavior. The critical issue is that the senior leader must live by the ethical rules he establishes.

The senior leader's philosophy on ethics sets the climate on which discipline and the standards of the organizations will evolve. One must study the doctrine and articulate their own ethics and also those of the U.S. Army. A leader's ethical behavior will assist in achieving trust and understanding within the organization.

Trust

You may be deceived if you trust too
much, but you will live in torment
if you do not trust enough.

Frank Crane

Without trust and mutual respect among leaders and subordinates, a large organization will often suffer a combination of low performance and poor morale. When trust is not present, an appropriate climate is difficult to obtain. People work with a feeling of uneasiness. Decentralization calls upon the leader to trust his subordinates. But extending too much trust too easily can weaken an organization. What is the proper amount of trust? Certainly trust and decentralization are necessary at the senior leader level in large organizations where the issues are more complex. However, at this level trust may be

more difficult to obtain. Leaders must not only trust subordinates, they must believe in their ability--perhaps more so than the subordinates believe in themselves.

Some leaders do not trust their subordinates and devote too much time on mundane issues. One of our Presidents once was accused of not looking at the forest, or the trees, but spent all his times looking at the leaves on the trees.⁵⁴

Most well-run organizations appear to have a balanced amount of centralization and decentralization. There is trust not only from the superior down, but subordinates trust their superiors likewise. This two-way trust in an organization many times results from informal communication systems integrated with formal systems, which serve to dispel rumors and misinformation.

Senior leaders must have confidence that they have risen to their current position due to no mistake. Gaining rank and position and increased responsibilities are the results of hard work, study and their superiors trust in them to serve at a higher position. Leaders must trust themselves and go sometimes with their "gut" feelings. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "The essence of genius is spontaneity and instinct."

Another major contributor to trust is the senior leader's articulation of standards of the organization. He must tell why the standards are necessary. Integrity, especially in the reporting systems, must be understood by everyone. There can be no grey areas for interpretation,

which creates an atmosphere of mistrust. Many times reporting systems without clearly defined standards are the culprits that create an atmosphere of distrust. Throughout the organization, people do not know what to believe.

Senior leaders who establish healthy organizations will often increase trust as times goes on. However, increased reliance on trust must be a calculated decision, based on the performance of the organization and the amount of training and experience the subordinates have. Many times subordinates are not ready for the amount of responsibility delegated to them. Further, a senior leader must always consider how the other subordinates are going to view the decision a senior leader has made about placing more trust in a particular section or person.

The dynamics of AirLand Battle and the complexity of future operations may require more decentralization at higher levels of responsibility. Senior leaders must create a climate that permits subordinate leaders to take risk and make decisions. Most futurists agree that senior leaders must allow more initiative, foresight and decision making responsibility.⁵⁵ Pushing decision-making down in the organization to where the information is and allowing for independent judgment of subordinate leaders is a practical response to a physically dispersed, fast-moving and confused battlefield.

Even so, senior leaders must approach the issue of trust and decentralization with caution. It may be more

appropriate to begin with a centralized decision-making mold and then allow more decentralization as time goes on. However, this may cause a bad first impression. Leadership philosophy should address this issue in a positive manner to prevent misunderstanding.

In a leadership philosophy, the critical point is to address the issue so that members of the organization have insight into the leader's orientation. Most will find that the organization can stand anything as long as the leader is straight-forward and willing to listen and negotiate on those issues that make a better organization.

CONCLUSION

Using the VOL Model, the newly appointed senior leader can generate much information and insight for a statement of his leadership philosophy. The VOL Model's flexibility allows one to add or omit variables of leadership as they may apply to his individual situation. It enables one to reflect on his development as a leader. It encourages one to adapt their leadership style, insofar as possible, to the requirements of his new leadership position. Thus it encourages one to anticipate fully his new organizational environment. When he shares his philosophy document, he creates precise expectations in the organization. Also, he allows his new staff to capitalize on his strengths and to compensate for his weaker areas of leadership.

In effect, then, the VOL Model is a heuristic device:

It enables the senior leader to explore systematically, through his own appropriate questions, his career task--starting with his own capabilities, expectations, and values and going on to his assessment of the organization's needs, missions, and emergent role. Current Army doctrine does not adequately prepare the Army's "best and brightest" for the greatest personal challenge of their careers--their entry into senior leadership roles. The best preparation begins with self-assessment and extends to the organization's needs and mission. Likewise, sharing this preparation in a carefully formulated statement of leadership philosophy paves the way for an open, productive relationship between the senior leader and his new organization. The VOL Model, then, enables the new senior leader to prepare thoroughly for his new role. If he then shares this preparation with his new organization, he is offering a most professional "greeting." The VOL Model enables him to envision himself doing the best possible job of leadership he can in a new organization. Therefore, the VOL Model will produce well-oriented senior leaders. The leader's orientation will in turn provide new or sustained direction for the leader's organization. The VOL Model thus could contribute to a better-led Army. Why not give it a try?

ENDNOTES

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